

Memorial Hall (First Deerfield Academy)
On north side of Memorial Road, on
part of Lot 27
Deerfield Village
Franklin County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-646

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MASS
6-DEER
18--

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MEMORIAL HALL (FIRST DEERFIELD ACADEMY)

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Location: Massachusetts, Franklin County, Deerfield Village. On N. side of Memorial Road, on part of Lot 27.

Present Owner: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Mass.

Present Occupant: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

Present Use: Historical Museum.

Brief Statement of Significance: The first building of the Deerfield Academy, occupied by them nearly 80 years; for another 80 years the home of a museum noted for its study and preservation of local history and associated artifacts.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Deerfield Academy until 1878, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association to date. (1) (2)
2. Date of Erection: 1797 - 1798. (1) (2) (Note: records of the Deerfield Academy at the time of its beginning are not now in existence.)
3. Architect: Asher Benjamin. (9)
4. Notes on alterations and additions: Enlarged by building on a third story and adding a three-story wing, 1810. (1) (2)
Converted into a museum in 1878. (1) (2) Dedicated September 8, 1880. (3)
Front portion: wooden cornice removed, brick walls raised three feet, and new roof constructed, covered with tin, brick walls painted, partitions removed on third floor, 1879. (4) Interior of rear wing unchanged then. (5)
Plans adopted, prepared by M. Roscoe Drew of Greenfield, to make an enlargement, in 1915. (6) This new wing built, 1916. (7)
Steel-framed windows and sash installed throughout, 1927. (8)
Window shutters removed some time after beginning of 20th century /See B.2. below/, perhaps when steel sash were installed.

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B. Important old views:

1. Map of the Town of Deerfield, from actual surveys by Benjamin A. Clark, C. E. Published by Richard Clark, 115 Wharton St., Philadelphia, 1855. Lith. by W. H. Rease, N.E. Cor 4th & Chesnut (sic) Sts., Phila. This has a lithographic view of the building. Map is in the possession of the P. V. M. Ass'n, in Memorial Hall, Deerfield.
2. A Guide to the Museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, by George Sheldon, Deerfield, 1908. Photograph on cover, and another on the frontispiece, by Frances S. Allen and Mary E. Allen, showing shutters on the building.

C. Sources of information:

1. History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Vol 5, p 495 ff, Margaret Harris, Origin and History of Deerfield Academy.
2. George Sheldon, A History of Deerfield, Mass., 1636-1886, E. A. Hall & Co., Greenfield, Mass., 1896. Vol. 1, p. 617-618; Vol. 2, p. 843 ff.
3. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. II, p. 38 ff.
4. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. II, p. 2, 3.
5. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. I, p. 434 ff.
6. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. VI, p. 216.
7. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. VI, p. 291 ff.
8. Hist. & Proc. of the P.V.M.A., Vol. VII, p. 442.
9. Samuel Chamberlain and Henry N. Flynt, Frontier of Freedom, Hastings House, New York, 1957. p. 128.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: Original plan attributed to Asher Benjamin, architect. This building shows the form of an Academy building at the close of the 18th century, and as altered, in the early 19th century. Three stories; front: 28' x 60', wing: 33' x 33'; main section and wing forming L-plan.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Orientation (by compass reading): Main front faces toward south.
2. Foundations: Brick. Moulded brick base course on main section of building.
3. Wall construction: Load-bearing brick, Flemish bond; soft brick with lime-sand mortar. Brick string course between first and second stories. One brick partition, one story high, in main section.
4. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main (S) doorway now has segmental brick arch over; double doors, heavy 2-panel with glazed transom over. Evidence of door openings now bricked up, on east and west walls of main section. Equivocal traces of a second doorway on south front.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Modern steel D-H sash throughout, installed in 1927. Windows formerly had exterior shutters, none to be found now. Flat brick arches over most windows. Segmental arches over third floor windows of main section. Sand-stone window sills.
5. Roof
 - a. Shape - covering: Hip roof, now covered with asbestos-cement shingles.
 - b. Framing: Roof of wing has heavy ridgepole, half-log rafters -- appears to be original 1810 framing. Roof of main section reconstructed in 1879.

c. Cornice, eaves: Main section has corbelled brick cornice, installed in 1879. Wing has wooden cornice with curved modillions (something like Batty Langley), of a date not later than about 1850 (similar to that shown on lithograph of c 1850). Modern sheet metal gutters.

d. Dormers: none.

6. Chimneys: Brick. Those in wing appear original. One in main section appears rebuilt; evidence that one was removed from inside of east wall, probably in 1879.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor Plan: Main portion - hall off-center, one room each side. Third floor mostly open, as dormitory. Rear wing - corridor in center, rooms both sides.
2. Stairways: Main stairway - open; square spindles, turned newel posts. Straight. Secondary stairway in wing, generally similar detail.
3. Floor: Structural framing not visible. Wide covering boards, fastened with wrought nails, mostly natural finish, some painted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered throughout, painted. Partitions in the wing constructed of vertical planks with split lath and plaster applied to both faces. Ceiling of third floor in wing shows split lath and plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Simple 4-panel. (Note: most doors have been removed. Some modern metal-clad doors have been installed).
6. Trim: Wood, with mouldings, in main section. Plain wood, in wing. Generally painted.
7. Hardware: Butts. Thumb-latches. The old bell from the cupola is preserved in the museum collection.
8. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Originally by fireplaces and stoves. Some fireplaces have been closed, some apparently removed. Steam, central system.

D. Site

1. General Setting: On secondary street in village.

2. Enclosures: Heavy fence with granite posts in front, woven wire fence on west and north sides, to separate from grammar school grounds.
3. Outbuildings: Small brick privy at north, apparently of fairly modern date.
4. Walks: Gravel path from street to main entrance.
5. Landscaping: Specimen trees and shrubs set in large grass lawn; some foliage plants and flowers planted near building.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service - August 4, 1959